



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
655 Parfet Street, Room E200C Lakewood, Colorado 80215
Phone (720) 544-2808 • Fax (720) 544-2965 • www.co.nrcs.usda.gov

Petra Barnes Walker, Public Information Officer
720-544-2808

NRCS Prioritizes Conservation Planning

Lakewood, CO - The Natural Resources Conservation Service in Colorado is encouraging farmers and ranchers to develop comprehensive conservation plans. Many landowners are interested in enhancing the condition and productivity of their natural resources and reaping greater returns from their efforts. Whatever the case the may be, the first step is to know and understand the condition of the resources you're working with. A conservation plan provides that information.

The NRCS conservation planning process has many benefits including that it provides an assessment and inventory of the condition of the land, it utilizes and considers alternative approaches to land treatment, and is based on the objectives of the landowner resulting in the optimum conservation management system being identified. Also, if an agricultural producer applies to participate in certain NRCS Farm Bill programs, conservation plans facilitate priority treatment.

"The right first step in any natural resource improvement or enhancement project is the development of a conservation plan," says Tim Carney, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, Lakewood, CO. *"And, although the plans are not required when applying for NRCS programs, the Agency wants to reemphasize to our customers just how important they are."*

To further illustrate the agency's emphasis on developing conservation plans, NRCS has re-structured the 2008 Farm Bill program application schedule by accelerating the initial cut off dates for some program applications. Applications for the 2008 Environmental Quality Incentives Program are accepted year round, but the initial cut off for processing applications has been set at November 2nd, 2007. In future years, NRCS is planning to set initial farm bill application cut off dates in mid summer.

"The change affects how we in Colorado NRCS do business," Carney goes on to say. *"We want to give agricultural producers and NRCS field staff adequate time to conduct upfront conservation planning before finalization of a conservation program application. Conservation*

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider

planning not only takes time, but most importantly it take the right timing. Rescheduling some application cut off dates is just one of the changes that will afford us the opportunity to spend more of the right time in the field with our customers.” Applications based on a developed conservation plan will be processed first. Producers are encouraged to sign up early to facilitate the planning process.

Conservation plans are developed by NRCS employees who utilizing state of the art technology and scientifically based expertise. Plans are developed to provide management systems that if implemented can have a positive impact on the quality of soil, water, air, plants, and wildlife habitats, as well as property investment.

The planning process is simple and consists of 1) the identification of problems and opportunities 2) determining objectives 3) conducting an inventory of existing resources 4) analyzing the resource data 5) formulating alternatives 6) evaluating alternatives 7) making decisions 8) implementing the plan and 9) evaluating the plan.

It is without a doubt one of the best things you can do if you have made agriculture your way of life.

For more information call or drop into your local NRCS office located in the USDA Service Center that services your County. Make an appointment today to discuss the possibility of developing your very own comprehensive conservation plan.

-end-